

Fire Department Assistance Grant Information

The committee for the 2005 Fire Department Assistance Grant has made its selections. To see which fire departments received awards go to www.ffsl.utah.gov/ufragrant.htm

This program is an ongoing, collaborative effort with the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Utah Fire and Rescue Academy and the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands to provide assistance to Utah's fire departments. Each of these agencies share a strong commitment to improve the safety and capability of Utah's fire service. This document explains the priorities of the grant and how it is administered. If you have additional questions please contact Tracy Dunford, the Grant Administrator, at 801-538-5502.

PURPOSE

The Fire Department Assistance Grant program provides technical and financial assistance to the fire departments of Utah to improve their ability to safely and effectively provide fire protection and manage hazardous material incidents. It's primary objective is to assist communities in organizing, training and equipping fire departments.

FUNDING

Grant funding originates from the following sources:

RFA - Rural Fire Assistance (RFA) is available to rural communities through the Department of the Interior (DOI). This federally funded program is administered by the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands. These funds are available to communities with a population of 10,000 or less that are adjacent to lands managed by the BLM or FWS. This funding is for communities to improve their wildland fire fighting and prevention capabilities. These funds may be used to purchase wildland fire vehicles. These funds are intended to assist fire departments that regularly support the BLM or FWS with wildland fire suppression. Communities must demonstrate that funding will be a benefit to the BLM or FWS. These funds are available to assist communities with a grant of up to \$20,000 and they require a 10% match.

VFA - Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) is a federally funded program offered through the U.S. Forest Service and administered by the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands. The VFA grants are limited to rural communities with a population of 10,000 or less for organizing, training and equipping fire departments for fire suppression; structural or wildland. These funds are available to assist eligible communities with a grant of up to \$5,000 and they require a 50% match.

UFRA - Utah Fire & Rescue Academy (UFRA) funding is available to Utah's fire departments for the enhancement fire suppression capabilities including hazardous materials needs. These funds have no restriction on community size. These funds are available to assist eligible communities with a grant of up to \$5,000 and they require a 50% match. A portion of these funds have been earmarked for a technology initiative. This initiative will offer departments a one time opportunity to purchase a computer. This grant is meant to improve reporting and record keeping. This grant requires no match by the department. Departments receiving this grant are required to maintain internet service year-round and participate in electronic reporting of fire reports and training information. There is no restriction on community size to be eligible for these funds. Application for the technology grant does not affect a department's eligibility for the previously mentioned grants.

MATCHING

Matching - With the exception of the technology grant, all the sources of funding in the Fire Department Assistance Grant require a match. The Fire Department Assistance Grant allows you to meet your obligation for matching funds through a variety of methods including in-kind services or sweat equity. The use of in-kind services allows a department to use the value of their time and labor as the matching portion of the grant. Some examples of in kind services are: time spent in training, labor to build up an engine or time spent teaching children about fire safety. Provided that you outline your intentions in the grant application and are able to provide proper documentation, matching can be across categories. For example: time spent doing fire prevention could be the in kind match for a grant to purchase PPE. The use of in kind services as match implies department/community funds are not readily available and, therefore, demonstrates a greater need.

If approved, your proposal becomes a contract. Any changes made in your proposed matching portion must be approved by the grant administrator.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The different sources of funding that make up this grant have different eligibility and matching requirements. By completing the application you will apply for all of the funding sources. The application contains questions that will determine which source of funding each department is eligible to receive. Applications will be given a total score and ranked against the other applicants. Applications are awarded funding according to their rank.

Priorities - The grant committee establishes priorities which act as general guidelines for awarding grant funds each year. While some modification occurs annually, training, personal protective equipment, and operational resources have been the main focus. Applications from departments that match their needs closely to the grant priorities generally rate highest. The committee attempts to provide aid to communities that demonstrate the greatest need. Given the diversity within the fire service of Utah, it is possible these priorities may not cover a vital need within a specific fire department. Therefore, the grant committee welcomes any and all grant requests for resources a community feels it needs and cannot meet with local funding.

The priorities for the Fire Department Assistance grant are as follows:

Initial organization - This category is for a department's initial start-up. The initial acquisition of basic safety and fire fighting equipment is covered in this category.

Training - Training and certification to meet state and national standards in hazardous material handling, structural or wildland fire. Training is the key element which allows personnel to deal with life-threatening situations in a safe, effective manner. The grant will pay out-of-pocket training costs (tuition, travel, per diem, certification fees, etc.) while the departments will be expected to provide the trainee salary, whether paid or donated, as their matching portion.

Fire Prevention - Equipment and materials, wildland or structural, needed to implement fire prevention programs are included under this priority. Programs to reduce the hazard in the wildland urban interface would qualify in this category. As with training, department member salary, paid or donated, required to implement prevention programs provides the matching portion.

Personal Protective Equipment - These items are necessary for the individual firefighter to safely conduct operations on hazardous materials, structural fire or wildland fire incidents. This includes protective clothing/equipment and self contained breathing apparatus. Wildland fire fighting boots can be purchased under this category. Departments may purchase boots meeting NWCG standards (leather, non-steel toe, lace up, minimum 8" top, non-skid sole) with a total purchase price not to exceed \$250.00 per pair. It also includes upgrading or refurbishment of existing clothing/equipment and self contained breathing apparatus. Primary consideration will be given to items which will

assist in compliance with the provisions of the Utah Occupational Safety and Health Act (UCA Title 34A, Chapter 6) and the National Fire Protection Association Standard on Fire Occupational Safety and Health Program (NFPA 1500* 1997).

Basic Suppression Equipment and Tools - These are the items necessary for on-scene operations. Items to be considered include (but are not limited to) basic firefighting tools, appliances, hoses, nozzles, ladders and apparatus. The acquisition, transportation and buildup of federal excess equipment (FEPP) into suppression units will be considered under this priority. Primary consideration will be given to requests for items to establish basic fire protection capabilities.

Special needs - This could be a need not covered in the other categories or a situation that has materially reduced the ability of a fire agency to provide basic life safety to their community. This could be the loss of a fire house, damage to an apparatus or the loss of a significant portion of personal protective equipment, tools, or equipment. These situations will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Eligibility - Fire departments must meet the following criteria:

1. The fire department must be currently filing Uniform Fire Incident Reporting System (UFIRS) reports to the Fire Marshal's Office.
2. The fire department must be participating in the Utah Fire Service Certification system and have department members certified to at least Structural Fire Fighter I and/or Wildland Fire Fighter I.
These two requirements are verified with the Fire Marshal's Office, the Utah Fire Service Certification Office. If these requirements cannot be confirmed, the request is removed from consideration unless some extenuating circumstances exist (e.g. new fire department).
3. The fire department must be able to provide the required matching portion of the grant to cover the value of the requested items/projects. All resources are eligible for the applicant's matching portion. This includes in-kind services (sweat equity).
4. Applications must be for the enhancement of fire protection services, equipment and/or training. Ambulances, paramedic training, EMT training, etc. are not within the scope of this program.
5. The grant funds must be spent and documentation submitted by December 31.

To be eligible for the 10% matching grants departments must meet the above criteria and:

1. Serve a rural community with a population of 10,000 or less.
2. Use the funding to enhance wildland fire fighting capabilities. This includes, but is not limited to: fire fighter training, fire fighting equipment, personal protective equipment and the development of fire prevention programs and/or standards. Structural fire fighting training and equipment are not within the scope of this program.
3. Be adjacent to and benefit lands administered by the BLM or FWS.

Joint applications - Multiple agencies may submit requests for joint-use items. The advantage is the ability to obtain high cost items by sharing the expense among several agencies. Examples of items considered for multiple agency use include (but are not limited to) training materials/equipment, development of training facilities, breathing air cascade systems, and breathing air compressor system. Mobile equipment/apparatus such as water tenders and wildland engines will also be considered.

Documentation must be provided by all participating agencies or groups for multiple agency requests.

Participation in such a project may limit the eligibility of the community to an individual department grant.

Mailing and Distribution – Notice of the opening of the grant application period is mailed to every known fire service organization in Utah. Additional applications are given to the staff of the Utah Fire and Rescue Academy and the Area Managers of the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands for distribution to groups who request one. Industrial, state and federal fire service organizations are excluded from consideration. A downloadable application is available online at: www.ffsl.utah.gov/ufragrant.htm

APPLICATION EVALUATION

Evaluation of Applications - Applications are evaluated based on a community's relative need.

This is determined from existing operational resources, personal protective equipment, community support, and needs of the community. Specifically, the following questions are used in determining the community's priority position:

Questions 1 and 2 establishes eligibility

Questions 3 through 5 and 18 determine the relative need of a department

Questions 6 through 13 determine which grant funds your department is eligible to receive

Questions 14 through 17 offer departments an opportunity to clarify their request.

Numerical values are assigned to each of these questions, with the exception of questions 14, 15 and 17. The sum of these values allows the applications to be given a score and ranked. This evaluation is to place the requesting communities in some type of order for evaluation by the grant committee. The committee reviews all requests. It has authority to accept in total, in part or reject any grant request. Regardless of order, the committee may choose to fund any request based on its merits. Decisions are made on a consensus basis.

NOTIFICATION

All applicants are notified via mail by July 31 of the items/projects for which they will be receiving assistance. Once a department has been notified of the award, it is able to make the approved expenditures. A maximum dollar amount of assistance is specified along with a deadline date. Any changes in items/projects must be approved in advance by the grant coordinator. A second notification is mailed in November to departments that have not spent grant funds, as a reminder of spending deadlines. Departments who do not use funds by December 31 will be notified by mail that the deadline has passed and the funds will be awarded to another department in the second round of grant awards. If circumstances exist that prevent your department from meeting the December 31 deadline, you may contact the grant administrator to request an extension.

REIMBURSEMENT

Successful applicants will receive grant funds as a reimbursement. Departments must provide appropriate documentation demonstrating they have purchased the requested and approved items or training. The department must then complete an itemized expenditure report and submit it along with copies of invoices and canceled checks to:

Jane Martinez
Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands
1594 West North Temple, Suite 3520
P.O. Box 145703
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-5703.

This documentation must be received by December 31 to receive reimbursement.

SECOND ROUND

Unused funds due to forfeiture, cancellation of projects or overestimation of actual costs are re-allocated in a second round of grant notifications. These funds are awarded to the original approved applicants by the Grant Committee.

COMMITTEE

The grant committee is composed of seven members representing different segments of Utah's Fire Service and agencies contributing to the program. Following is the breakdown of the committee representation:

Earl Levanger, Kane County Fire Warden, representing the Volunteer Fire Service

Dave Austin, Weber Fire District Chief, representing the Paid Fire Service

Steve Lutz, Director of the Fire and Rescue Academies' Outreach Program, representing the Utah Fire and Rescue Academy and the Outreach Program

Ron Morris, Utah State Fire Marshal, representing the Utah Fire Marshal's office.

Susan Marzec, representing the Bureau of Land Management, Utah State Office

Ken Kiser, representing the U.S. Forest Service, Region 4

Tracy Dunford, Grant Coordinator and Assistant Fire Management Coordinator for Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands, representing the same.